



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: January 15, 2020

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Town of Nantucket Utilizes Green Community Grant Funding to Expand Public EV-Charging Stations and to Increase Energy Efficiency

NANTUCKET, MA –

In April 2020, the Town of Nantucket received an initial grant of **\$139,340** from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Energy Resources by becoming a Massachusetts Green Community. This designation was achieved by the Town of Nantucket last January by demonstrating a firm commitment to reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, such as through the adoption of the more stringent Energy Stretch Code, requiring the Town purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles, and producing an Energy Reduction Plan.

These grant funds have allowed the Town to make energy efficiency improvements to the Nantucket High School and Visitor Services building this past fall, as well to install new electric vehicle charging stations across the island, which are now ready for public use.

The Visitor Services building located at 25 Federal Street received a new air-source heatpump ("minisplit") system to improve the building's heating, cooling and dehumidification with greater efficiency and increased comfort and control. The new minisplit units installed within the building's offices and public restrooms are expected to save the Town approximately 7,050 kWh in energy, equivalent to \$1,100 annually.

“The new mini-splits, which were recently installed, have made the colder winter months a lot more comfortable. The heating is consistent and uniform now that we don’t rely on individual plugged-in radiators,” said Janet Schulte, Director of Culture and Tourism. “I anticipate that the quiet units will be a welcome relief from the noisy window air-conditioner during phone calls and Zoom meetings next summer. The unit in the women’s bathroom has kept the space much drier, too.”

The new high-efficiency boiler at the Nantucket High School is expected to reduce annual oil consumption by 5,424 gallons, the equivalent of \$16,272, and is designed to better meet the heating demands of the facility.

In addition, public electric vehicle charging stations have been installed at various municipal locations across the island, including at the Washington Street public parking lot, the Public Safety Facility, the Nantucket Memorial Airport, and the former Fire Station on Pleasant Street, which will provide the public with convenient charging access in the mid-island shopping district. To encourage the transition to cleaner transportation alternatives, public charging will remain free through the end of the year.

“By expanding access to charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, the Town aims to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by making it easy for drivers to charge their vehicles with infrastructure that is convenient, affordable and reliable,” said Town Manager Libby Gibson.

“Being an electric vehicle owner myself, I know what a challenge it is to find charging stations. By increasing the availability of such stations, I hope that we will have done our part in encouraging people to purchase more electric vehicles, which as everyone knows are cheaper to maintain and better for the environment,” said Chief Bill Pittman.

In addition to the Green Community grant funds, the Town also received \$147,566 in National Grid incentives to support the upgrade projects. While the initial grant award was automatic, the Town is already looking ahead to the next available grant round to further assist the Town in meeting its 20% Energy Reduction Plan goal, said the Town’s Energy Coordinator Lauren Sinatra.

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To receive the Green Community designation and accompanying grant funds the town had to meet the program’s five criteria. The first two criteria require the town to pass zoning bylaws for renewable or alternative energy generating facilities, research and development facilities, or manufacturing facilities, and to create an expedited application and permitting process. The third criterion requires the town to establish an energy use baseline and subsequent Energy Reduction Plan (ERP), which accounts for a 20 percent reduction in energy consumption. Criterion four requires the town to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles and criterion five requires the town to adopt the stretch code or something comparable.

Each Green Community meeting these criteria is eligible for \$125,000 in base funding plus a formulaic allocation based on the town’s population and income. To access these grant funds the Town was required to submit a project application detailing how the funds will be spent.

The Green Communities Division of the Department of Energy Resources was established through Section 10 of Chapter 25A of Massachusetts General Law. The Division is responsible for the administration of the Green Community designation and grant program which is able to provide up to \$20 million annually to cities and towns. To date, the Division has awarded 271 Massachusetts towns with the Green Community designation.

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